***Pillars in God's Temple

RV56-02***

Please open your Bibles to Revelation 3:7-13, the letter to the church at Philadelphia. This is segment number 34. The Lord Jesus Christ has promised these Philadelphia type believers that they will escape the tribulation judgments of God's wrath which is destined to come upon all the world. The positive volition of these saints to Bible doctrine enlightenment makes them the objects of divine blessing and of eternal prosperity.

The world today is largely indifferent and antagonistic to the witnessing of Philadelphia type Christians. But that same world is going to grieve forever over their rejection of the truth that these believers tried to make clear to them. The Lord Jesus wants Bible doctrine believers to so live and serve as to earn rewards and crowns in heaven.

So we read in Revelation 3:11 that Jesus said, "Behold, I come quickly. Hold fast that which you have (doctrinal orientation), that no man take your crown." These crowns are more than rewards. These are Medals of Honor which the Bible lists for those who perform exceptional service in certain categories. We have gone through and studied those particular Medals of Honor crowns. What the Lord wants us to do is to live in such a way, and to serve in such a way, that rewards and crowns are secured to us. Soon, the Lord promises to return to take us to the glory of heaven. So, being silenced or discouraged by negative volition type people only leads to your personal loss of treasures in heaven, and of rewards and of crowns.

So, to put this all into perspective now, we come to Revelation 3:12 where the Lord Jesus briefly reviews what is in store in eternity for every church-age believer. Notice that I said every church-age believer, without exception, because this verse is going to say some of the most amazing, unbelievable things, perhaps, to be read anywhere in the Bible. They are things that any sensitive Christian will be thrilled to the depths of his soul to realize that this is what God has in store for him.

**Overcomers**

"Him that overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out. And I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God, and I will write upon Him my new name." We begin with verse 12. This is our position in eternity: "Him that overcomes." The Greek word is the verb "nikao," The word "nikao" means "to conquer;" "to prevail;" or, "to be victorious." Actually in the Greek language it is a military term, and it is used here to describe a person relative to his enslavement to the evil of Satan, and to the destiny of eternal death. That is, he is a victor over the destiny of hell. He is a victor over the evil that is inherent in him, and that Satan promotes.

It is used here in the sense of 1 John 5:4-5. I want to look back at that once more, because that gives us the identification (the interpretation) of who are the people who are overcomers. Of whom is He speaking? "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that overcomes the world: even our faith. Who is he that overcomes the world but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" So, the overcomer here is the person who is born again – born again spiritually. He is the one who is born of God. He is the one who has received the gift of eternal life by faith in Jesus Christ. He is the one to whom has been imputed the absolute righteousness of Jesus Christ, without which no man can go to heaven. He is the one who has believed God's offer of salvation based on the death of Jesus Christ as the substitute for the sinner in the payment for his sin – the payment of death. He is the one who has been saved by grace, apart from any human doing; apart from any human good works; or, apart from any religious rituals.

Remember that when the Bible talks about human works, it means human doing. It means whatever a human being is able to do. A human work is what a person can do. That covers all the religious rituals, as well as all the do-goodism of the human soul. It covers all of the attempts to reach God through such rituals as water baptism, or the Lord's Supper, or joining a church, or anything else that's involved in religious activity.

So, who is the overcomer? It is the person who has detached himself from human doing, and has permitted God to adjust (to reconcile) that person to Himself through an act of grace based upon the death of Christ? Every genuinely born again believer, therefore, is an overcomer. This term does not relate, therefore, to how a Christian lives his life. An overcomer is not a person who lives a godly life. Overcomers should live godly lives, but that does not make them an overcomer in this sense. This relates to a Christian's position in Christ which credits him with absolute righteousness. He has overcome the problem of his separation (his alienation) from God, and God has been the one who has performed that for him.

**Non-Overcomers**

The non-overcomer is a totally different kind of character (a totally different breed). Just very briefly, if you'll jump forward to Revelation 21:7-8, we have two verses that describe the non-overcomer type, and those characteristics which basically characterize (which are basically true) of the non-overcomer: "He that overcomes shall inherit all things." That's the person that we just read about in 1 John – the person who is born of God: "And I will be his God, and he shall be My son. But (the non-overcomer now) the fearful (that is, the cowardly), the unbelieving, and the abominable, and the murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers (those who deal in the occult), and idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone (with fire and sulfur), which is the second death."

So, here you have the description of the lake of fire as the destiny of all these who are non-overcomers. It describes, in certain basic characteristics, what is generally true of unbelievers. As you run your eye over these features, you see that these are things that generally are true of unbelievers. These are the things which, when a person becomes a Christian, are resolved very directly and very rapidly in his life: cowardliness; lack of faith; unbelieving; doing what is the vile thing; the murderer; the fornicator; the sexually immoral; the sorcerer (looking to an occult direction for contact with reality); and, the idolater. The idolater is not the guy now who sets up a little god of stone and wood, but the one who is an idolater through what the Bible says is the core of idolatry: covetousness – the desire for all kinds of things, and the thing you desire becomes your god. Then this list also includes all those who are liars. These are things so characteristic of the unbeliever.

When you become a Christian, you now have the capacity for these things to be changed. In a Christian in whom these things are not changed, God comes down with discipline and judgment, and you cannot get away with these characteristics once you have become an overcomer.

In the Greek language, this word "nikao" ("to overcome") is in the present tense. That tells us that we're talking about something which is a constant status of this person, because once you become an overcomer, you are born again forever. It's in the active voice, which, as you know, indicates that this is a personal possession (a personal characteristic). It's in the participle mood which indicates that we have here a spiritual principle being stated.

Then we go to the next thing to notice: "Him that overcomes, the Lord Jesus says, I will make." The word "make" is "poieo." This word means "to make, to cause, or to produce." It refers to what God promises to do (what the Lord Jesus promises to do) for every believer in the church age as represented by these Philadelphia type Christians. It is in the future tense because it is something that is to be done in the future for the believer in heaven. We're talking about something now that is going to be true of you in heaven. It is active, because Jesus Christ Himself is going to do this for you. It is indicative mood, which indicates a statement of fact.

**Pillars**

What's he going to do? He's going to make, of every one of you, a "stulos," which means "a pillar." This is a word for a column which supports the weight of a building. It's the point of stability and strength in a structure. ...

In order to fully appreciate what it means to be made a pillar in the temple of God in heaven, we're going to have to back off and take a look a little bit about what pillars mean in Scripture. I don't know how much you've ever stopped to think about pillars, or what you've observed about pillars, but let's draw a few things together. One of the first things that comes to mind about pillars is in 1 Kings 7:15. We have here a description of Solomon in the construction of the temple: "For he cast two pillars of bronze of 18 cubits high apiece, and a line of 12 cubits did compass either of them about." Then it goes on to describe how they were made at the top; how they were designed; the decorative features upon them; and, something of the appearance that they had.

Then verse 21 says, "He set up the pillars in the porch of the temple." This seems to indicate that they were adjacent to the sides of the door as you came into the holy place of the temple. The temple, as you know, had really an inner sanctuary part. This inner part was the holy place. Then the holy of holies was the place which only the high priest entered, and he only came once a year. This was very carefully divided by a curtain. ... So as you entered into the temple ... on each side, Solomon constructed these two pillars made of bronze. It says, "He set up the pillars in the porch of the temple, and he set up the right pillar, and he called the name of it "Jachin." He set up the left pillar, and he called it "Boaz." This is interesting. He sets up the pillars, and he gives them names. It's unclear whether these were just freestanding pillars or whether they were part of the supporting structure. But that's irrelevant.

The thing that's interesting is what these names mean. The name "Jachin" means "he establishes." The name "Boaz" means "in him is strength." So, as you entered the actual inner sanctuary of the overall temple compound, there were these two pillars. The names were probably inscribed upon them to constantly remind the priest of something that was true about our God: "In Him is strength; He establishes." These, of course, signify strength and stability. They signify the idea of God's omnipotence; the idea of establishing; and, the idea of stability.

These pillars, of course, were also a feature of beauty in the temple design. As a thing of beauty, they probably reflected again the glory of the holiness of God. The key feature of beauty in anybody is just being a right kind of person with God. That's what makes a person attractive. The Bible talks about what makes a woman beautiful. It is not her use of cosmetics. It is not her natural features. The Scripture says that it is the hidden person of the soul that makes her a person of beauty. What that's talking about is her compatibility with the integrity of God, and her compatibility with the holiness of God. That makes her a lovely person, no matter what her external appearances.

So, these pillars spoke of stability; they spoke of strength; and, they spoke of the beauty of holiness. These were apparently also used in times of crises in Israel for making special divine pronouncements. You have a couple of incidents recorded. One is in 2 Kings 11:14, and one is in 2 Kings 23:3. They point to times that were crises events in Israel. Pronouncements were made by what Scripture refers to as "the pillar." It may have been at one of these two pillars (one of these things that spoke so of God), where an official would stand and make a declaration to the people. So, these two pillars made of bronze were very important as you approached the worship of God in the temple that Solomon built.

We also have a record in Genesis 28:16 of the use of a pillar. This is the using of a pillar in a good sense, because we're going to see some use of pillars shortly in a bad sense. Here, you have Jacob engaged in setting up pillars. This was a very small kind of pillar, but nevertheless, the same idea: "And Jacob awakened out of his sleep, and he said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." Remember that he had this vision where he saw the ladder (the stairway) going from earth to heaven, and the angels were on it. And there was the promise of what Jacob would receive: He would be the channel of promise given to Abraham, and passed on to Isaac, and then now to Jacob. Jacob awakes from this vision. Verse 17 says, "And he was afraid. He said, "How awesome is this place? This is none other but the House of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

Remember that the situation is that he's out in a wilderness area by himself, having been fleeing from his father's house because of the deception that he played on his brother Esau in which he took the birthright from his brother. He's going to his Uncle Laban's home. He's en route. He stops overnight, and makes a campsite. He has a stone that he puts down for a pillow: "And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and he took the stone that he put for his pillow, and he set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. He called the name of that place Bethel. But the name of that city was called Luz at the first." "Bethel" means, of course, "house of God."

So, here you have the incident of Jacob setting up this memorial relative to the event of God's reiterating of the promise to him. Then you have the rest of his statement of how he will be faithful to God, and look to God for his provision, and so on. Verse 22 says, "And this stone which I have set for a pillar shall be God's house. And of all that You shall give me, I will surely give the tenth unto You." So, here a pillar is used in Scripture in the sense of a memorial. It is a commemoration of a promise of God, and of something that God is doing.

You have an incident of Moses setting up pillars in Exodus 24:3-4. This is another use of the pillar in a good sense: "And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the ordinances, and all the people answered with one voice and said, 'All the words which the Lord has said, we will do.'" They had just received the Law from Sinai, and Moses is reporting back to them what God has said: "And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, and rose up early in the morning, and built an altar unto the hill, and 12 pillars, according to the 12 tribes of Israel." So, here again was an occasion of commemoration of the reception of the Law from Sinai. It was commemorated with the erection of these pillars.

We have Job, in Job 9:6, speaking of God's power: "Shaking the pillars on which the earth rests." In Job 26:11, he says, "And making the pillars of heaven tremble," of course, speaking of pillars in a symbolic sense, but again, we have the concept of strength and stability.

Samson destroyed the Philistine temple by pulling down the two main supporting pillars. Judges 16:25-29 describe how Sampson asked to be led to the two supporting columns, and then reached out, because of his tremendous strength, and cracked those two supporting columns, and the whole structure came down on him as well as on the Philistines who were there worshiping their God and making fun of Samson. So, here a pillar is a symbol used as a symbol of judgment.

Jeremiah is commanded to stand like an iron pillar against wicked Judah in Jeremiah 1:18 so that the pillar is again reflecting spiritual strength and capacity.

But the Bible also shows us that the pillar was used in a bad sense. Satan always leads people to make something evil and dirty of what is sacred with God. So, a thing that was as magnificent as a pillar would not be something that Satan would overlook as an opportunity to pervert it into something evil. That's exactly what he has done. God uses pillars to signify strength, stability, honor, beauty, divine viewpoint, and enlightenment. Satan led people to see pillars not as symbols of stately, ennobling beauty and strength, but as the male symbol of the male sex organ in the pagan worship of the sun as the deity of life – connecting both the sun and the male sex organ as the source of life.

Queen Semiramis, who was associated with Nimrod in the establishing of the first anti-God religious system in Babylon, is recorded by ancient historians as having erected an obelisk, which is a freestanding column such as the George Washington Monument in Washington, DC. This obelisk was 130 feet high, and it was part of the sun worship system of Nimrod and Semiramis. This obelisk pillar was a symbol of the sun-god Baal, which represented Nimrod. The sun, of course, was viewed as the source of all life for the plants and animals. It was therefore viewed also as a symbol of the male phallus as a symbol of life.

In the Scriptures, these pillars, or obelisks, are called "standing pillars" in the Hebrew; and, "images" in the King James Version. For example, we can look at a couple of those. In 1 Kings 14:23, it is referring actually to these freestanding pillars that Satan is perverting into evil symbolism: "For they also built them high places and images." There is the Hebrew word for "standing pillars:" "And idols on every high hill under every green tree." These free-standing columns were a part of the Baal phallic sex worship system. 2 Kings 18:4 also refers to such an obelisk phallic cult symbol in the worship of the pagans. In 2 Kings 3:2, we have the words "the image of Baal," which in the Hebrew is "the pillar of Baal," referring to these obelisk type pillars.

Now this pillar, of course, was put in an upright position to point to the sun as the God, and also to symbolize the male sex act. Therefore, God commanded Israel to destroy these obelisks on every occasion that they came into contact with them. In Exodus 23:4, we have that stipulation laid out for Israel: "You shall not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works. But you shall utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images." Again, this is referring to their standing images, or their standing pillars. They were to cast these down because of what they represented. They represented Satan's counterfeit of the true God in making the sun the source of life, and they connected this with the degrading symbol of the pillar, perverted from the beauty that God used the pillar for, to the degradation of the illicit sex that was associated with the worship in ancient times of these pagan groups.

Therefore, Israel was also commanded never to erect a pillar as part of their worship system. In Leviticus 26:1, we have this stipulation laid out to Israel: "You shall make no idols nor carved images; neither rear you up a standing image." There you have it clearly translated – the obelisk type. "Neither shall you set up any image of stone in your land to bow down unto it, for I am the Lord your God."

So, this was no small thing concerning pillars and columns that God had dignified, and had a very significant symbolic use for (attached a symbolic meaning to). Satan was going to pervert this into something that was totally anti-God. So on every occasion, what Satan was doing was to be destroyed.

In time, as you know, Israel could not resist the temptation of amalgamating its worship with that of the pagans round about them that included such things as the phallic cult systems. So, in time, ancient Israel amalgamated Nimrod's religion with gods through worship. This same mixture (centuries later) was done by the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church today is that same amalgamation of Christianity with the Babylonian mystery cult.

Therefore, Israel disobeyed God, and it adopted the obelisk filler in its worship practices. In Ezekiel 8:5, you have the expression "image of jealousy." That is probably referring to an obelisk: "Then said He unto me, 'Son of man. Lift up your eyes now in the way toward the north.' So, I lifted up my eyes in the way toward the north, and beheld, northward, at the gate of the altar, this image of jealousy in the entrance." It was the custom among the pagans that these obelisks were erected directly in line with the entrance to the temple. That was very important to them. It symbolized the passageway into the presence of deity. The male and female prostitution that was associated with the temple worship of ancient times was symbolized by this standing obelisk as the means of communicating and coming in touch with the invisible deity. So, here, at the very gate of the altar of Jewish worship, they had set up this standing image – the obelisk with all that it meant in terms of the pagan cultures.

Placing this obelisk in this position represented very clearly the degree of moral degeneracy to which Israel had come after it had joined its worship system with that of the Nimrod system. I just want to read to you a little bit here from Ezekiel 8:6, as Ezekiel, in a vision, was carried back to Jerusalem and shown what was going on in the worship. These are the people who have received the Ten Commandments. These are the people to whom previous leaders had raised these columns in respect and commemoration for the divine viewpoint in light of the written Scriptures which they received: Verse 6 says, "And said furthermore unto me, 'Son of man, do you see what they do: even the great abominations that the house of Israel committed here, that I should go far from My sanctuary? But turn yet again, and you shall see greater abominations.'" The Lord said, "Ezekiel, do you see that? Do you see this obelisk they put up right there at the entranceway to the inner sanctuary. I want to show you something that's even worse than that."

He goes on in verse 7: "And He brought me to the door of the court. When I looked, behold, a hole in the wall. Then He said unto me, 'Son of man, dig now in the wall.' When I had dug in the wall;" he dug through this outer wall, and he comes inside to where he sees a door: "He said to me, 'Go in and, behold, the wicked abominations that they do here.' So, I went in." This is the sanctuary. This is the temple area that He's talking about: "So, I went in and saw, and, behold, every form of creeping thing and abominable beast, and all the idols of the house of Israel portrayed upon the walls round about. And there stood before them 70 men of the ancients of the house of Israel. In the midst of them stood Jaazaniah, the son of Shaphan, and every man his censer in his hand, and a thick cloud of incense went up. Then He said unto me, 'Son of man, have you seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chamber of his imagery? For they say, 'The Lord doesn't see us, The Lord has forsaken the earth.''"

These leaders of Israel within the temple precinct itself were worshiping the same kind of creeping, loathsome animal life that the pagans worshiped and upheld as their gods. You heard, perhaps, recently in the news of one of the worst train disasters in India. A train was passing over a high bridge (a point of great instability), and a cow got on the track. You know that a cow is deity in India. It's a sacred object. And instead of plowing into the cow and sending him to the happy dairy in the sky, the engineer slams on the brakes, and the train hits an accordion position, and topples hundreds of feet into a raging river below. And this was a train that was overloaded. People were riding on the roofs, and people were hanging on the side. Hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people were killed, and they entered, for eternity, the lake of fire. They went into Hades awaiting their transfer. It was all because of a stupid cow that they wanted to keep from injuring because it was a god.

These are the leaders of Israel, and this is the sort of thing they're doing within the house of the Lord.

But the Lord said, "Ezekiel, you haven't seen anything yet:" "He said unto me, 'Turn again, and you shall see greater abominations that they do." And incidentally, these leaders were saying, "We can do this. We're doing it here in the dark. We're doing it in this smoke-filled room. God doesn't see us." Politicians have thought that for centuries, and they're wrong.

"Then He brought me to the door of the gate of the Lord's house, which was toward the north, and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz." You know who that is. There's Tammuz, another name for Nimrod. They're turning back to the Babylonian system. That's the "T" that you see which is the sign of the cross today: "Then he said unto me, 'Have you seen this, O Son of man? Turn again, and you will see greater abominations than these.'" This was a pagan custom – to weep at a certain time of the year for Tammuz, who, as you know, was (by tradition) gored by a wild pig. Then miraculously, three days later was resurrected. So, the Feast of Ishtar was commemorated, which today is the feast of Easter, but converted by Roman Catholicism to a Christian meaning.

Verse 16: "And He brought me into the inner court of the Lord's house. Behold, at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, there were about 25 men with their backs toward the temple of the Lord, and their faces toward the East, and they worship the sun toward the East." These 25 men were priests. 24 priests served in what was called "a course" – a course of duty, or a period of duty. Within them, the 25th man was a high priest. So, here you have the high priest, and that particular course that was on duty, with their backs toward God in His temple, and their faces toward the sun as the god that they're worshiping. When Israel put those obelisks in front of their temple, they were telling a great deal, to all who had eyes to see, the depth of degradation to which they had fallen.

Verse 17: "Then He said unto me, 'Have you seen this, O Son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? For they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke Me to anger, and, lo, they put the branch to their nose.'" I don't know what that means. That's a hard expression. We're not sure what that means, but apparently it again had some kind of symbolic pagan practice significance.

Verse 18: "Therefore, I will also deal in fury. My eyes shall not spare. Neither will I pity. Though they cry in My ears with a loud voice, yet I will not hear them." So, very interestingly, as Israel became amalgamated in its worship with pagan practices, the very obelisk structure that Satan had perverted into a sex object, and which represented the sun-god (which God condemned and told them to destroy), they began setting up and using in their own worship. God has promised to cast down the obelisks of Israel to demonstrate the impotence of the sun-god Baal in Isaiah 27:9. So, God made it clear to them that they were not going to get away with it.

The most prominent use of obelisks in the worship of the sun-god was in Egypt. Egypt was a major stronghold of Babylon's mystery religion. One of the great centers of the worship of the sun-god in Egypt was a place called Heliopolis. That's the Greek name. It means "house of the sun," or "city of the sun." It was the place of the sun. This was a major center of the worship of the sun-god in Egypt. This same place is referred to in the Hebrew language of Jeremiah 43:13, where we read, "He shall break also the images." There we have again the standing images of Bethshemesh. Here you have the Hebrew name for Bethshemesh: "Beth Shemesh." This refers to the same thing. It means "house of the sun." The Hebrew name and the Greek name are referring to the same city. Jeremiah is actually referring to Heliopolis, the center of the pagan worship with the obelisks in Egypt. God declares that the images (the obelisks) of Bethshemesh in Egypt are destined for destruction: "He shall also break the obelisk (the standing images) of the house of the sun."

Many of these Egyptian obelisks were removed from Egypt to various nations in the world where they were set up and used for this same pagan worship practice of the sun. The Roman Emperor Caligula had an Egyptian obelisk taken from Heliopolis or Bethshemesh and brought to Rome in the period of 37-41 A.D for his circus. A Roman circus is a racetrack for horse racing. He had it set up there on his racetrack, which was located on Vatican Hill, which is where the Pope's church is now built. Perhaps Caligula brought it for good luck. These racetracks were big things. The circuses were big things in Rome. Out of a year's time, you might have 275 days of the year in which there were races being run. Also, gambling facilities were provided. Sometimes they had as many as 100 races a day.

So, the emperor brought one of these obelisks and set it down there in his racetrack. You can still see, like in the Circus Maximus in Rome now, that it had a place down the middle where various objects were placed in commemoration of the gods and one thing and another. So, he brought it, and put this obelisk up there.

This was right on Vatican Hill where he had his track. This same obelisk of Caligula, in time, which was a phallic symbol worshiping the sun, fell into the hands of the Roman Catholic Church. The very one that he brought from Heliopolis (Bethshemesh), which was used there in perverted worship of the sun-god (and which God declared that He would someday destroy all of those obelisks) has been transferred, and it now stands in St. Peter's piazza in front of the Cathedral of St. Peter's Basilica. Pope Sixtus VI, interestingly enough, had it moved so that it is directly in the entranceway to the basilica. It was off-center. This was the identical practice in pagan times. The obelisk had to point upward toward the sun, and stand directly in the entranceway of the temple.

Some of you saw the picture I showed you when we were in Rome last summer. I shot from inside the Basilica outside. That obelisk is right there as you go out the center entrance of the Basilica. This is the center of the Pontifex Maximus. I have a latest communication here from my observing watching scholar here on Jeremiah 43:13. ... There's another interesting note that one such obelisk from Heliopolis is in Central Park in New York City. Another is on the bank of the Thames River in London. That is true. They were put everywhere. One of these very ones from Heliopolis is in Central Park in York City. You can see it there today, and there is one on the Thames in England. One very interesting one is right there in St. Peter's Piazza. This is significant of where Roman Catholicism stands relative to the evil of the Satan practice and the Satan worship. This is a fitting symbol for the church, which is going to probably be the core of the harlot church of the tribulation era.

These columns and pillars were extensively used in pagan temples in the ancient world, and they were used there as phallic symbols. There's an inscription in the vestibule of the temple of Diana in Heliopolis that you can see to this day. This inscription says, "I, Dionysius, dedicate these phalli columns to Hera, my stepmother." Interestingly enough, if you are ever in Rome, you will be impressed that, as you stand in St. Peter's Piazza, you are surrounded by an arching colony of 248 standing columns which are identical to the kind of structure that was characteristic of pagan temples representing the male sex organ. Satan has perverted for unbelievers the symbolism of the pillar in God's program. To Satan, it represents a degenerative use of the male sex. It is worshiping Satan as the sun-god, and it is accompanied by the lowest forms of degradation and perversion.

In the New Testament, the church-age believers are described as "pillars" in the sense in which God uses it. No matter what perversion Satan comes up with, he cannot undo the dignity and the significance of the pillar in Scripture, and the meaning of that to us, because every one of you (no matter what kind of a Christian you are) is going to be a pillar of the temple of God in heaven forever.

So, we come to the New Testament, and we're interested in the use of the pillar there. We find that Peter, James, and John were called "pillars of the church in Jerusalem" in Galatians 2:9, meaning, again, strength and stability. We find that the church, as the body of Christ, is the pillar of divine viewpoint truth – real truth (1 Timothy 3:15). We have divine viewpoint enlightenment represented by the pillar. We have Revelation 3:12 that fascinates us now – that Christians in eternity will be "pillars of God." This is a figure of speech again conveying strength, stability, and divine viewpoint.

The significance of the analogy to the Philadelphia believers, as you know, is that they lived in an earthquake-prone area. They were used to having earthquakes. Very often, the buildings would fall, but the pillars would stand. There was something about the pillars that enabled them to survive the earthquakes, and I understand that there is one to this day that's still standing out of structures in that same location where the church of Philadelphia was.

Now, in heaven, God's people stand firm in eternal life forever, while Satan's unbelievers are going to fall into the eternal death in hell.

So, getting back to our passage in Revelation 3, the Lord Jesus says, "I'm going to make you a pillar:" a position of strength; of beauty; of honor; of divine viewpoint orientation; and, the beauty of holiness: "I'm going to make you a pillar in." The word "in" is the Greek word "en," which is a preposition indicating location in the temple, which is "naos." There is another word for "temple" in Greek. That is "hieros." That means the whole confines of the temple. But "naos" refers to the inner sanctuary – the holy place, and the holy of holies. So, we're talking about that which is speaking of the very presence of God Himself.

**Temples**

In the Old Testament, only the Levites as priest could enter the holy of holies and the holy place in the temple. In eternity, you and I are going to be, as church-age believers, pillars in God's heaven, in the inner sanctuary where God Himself is present. So, the Lord Jesus says, "My God." The Greek says, "*The* God," meaning God the Father. The temple of God in eternity is a thing that's of great interest to us then. On earth, the Christian is described as forming the temple of God the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 says, "Your body (here on earth) is viewed by God as a temple." It is a temple. What does that mean? It's the dwelling place of God. Here is where God dwells. 1 Peter 2:5 says that, "Christians, as living stones, are formed into a living temple built with Jesus Christ as the cornerstone, and the apostles and the prophets as the foundation," as described in Ephesians 2:19-22. A temple is a place of contact with deity. It symbolizes the character and the ways of deity. An earthly temple building is not where our God is located. Even Solomon, when dedicating his temple in 1 Kings 8:27, recognized that God is not confined to a building. Acts 7:48 teaches this. Acts 17:24 observes this. God is not confined to a building.

The Bible reveals that in heaven, there is no temple structure (Revelation 21:22). And I know that some of you have been sitting there waiting for us to figure that one out: "And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." When you get to Revelations 21 and 22, you have a description of heaven. In heaven, He says that there is no temple. What He is talking about is that there is no temple per se. There is no temple in heaven – a structure of a temple as such. The reason for this is that the presence of God makes heaven one vast temple. A temple was a place for the presence of deity. The temple of heaven is heaven itself, because it has the presence of God. So, all of heaven is one great temple, and God doesn't need a representation form of Himself in heaven.

So, the church-age believer stands as a pillar in heaven itself. That's what we're talking about. The church-age believer (you people) are going to be pillars within God's heaven. Revelation 21:16 describes the dwelling place of believers, possibly in the shape of a cube. It could be in the shape of a pyramid. But the shape of a cube is rather interesting because it does reflect what the holy of holies was like. The holy of holies was a perfect cube, and that's where God dwells. Here, heaven, in which we are going to dwell, and we're going to look at that in more detail in the next session – that heaven should compare to the shape of the holy of holies on earth. In heaven, all the essence of God is evident and in full operation with total compatibility with the will of God. There's no need for the representation of a temple.

This is an unbelievable position, then, for you and me, as Christians for all eternity, as pillars of God in heaven. Whatever Satan has done to pervert the symbol of the pillar, God has preserved it for what it really represents: that strength; that stability; that position of honor; and, that beauty. No Christian is excluded from this position. It is a grace achievement. That means total stability of divine viewpoint is going to be demonstrated. Isn't that fantastic? You will be a pillar because in heaven you will demonstrate total stability from divine viewpoint. You will have the full strength of spiritual maturity functioning in your experience. You'll be shining forth in the beauty of perfect holiness – absolute holiness. *You* are going to be absolute holiness, just as God is. You're going to have a position of honor because you're going to be the bride of Christ.

And as if that isn't enough, hold your hats, because He says, "And," and He adds something more. He adds this word: "exerchomai" in the Greek, which means "to go out" or "to come out." The first part of this word is "Ek," which is a preposition which means "to go out from." The second part of this word is "erchomai," which is a verb which stresses the actual act of departure as a whole, rather than the result of arriving at some place. It's looking overall at moving from a place. This particular Greek word stresses the overall concept of moving from some place. This word, therefore, means "to go out of" – the act of departure, or removal. It is in the aorist tense, which means that at a point in time, there's going to be a departure from the heavenly temple. It's active in voice, even though it isn't in form here. It is personal status in the temple of God. It is subjunctive, which means that it's a potential event of leaving the temple of heaven.

The Greek has another word. It throws in this word "exo," which means "outside," and it adds force to the idea of departure from the temple of heaven. This word stands first in the phrase, which is the Greek way of adding emphasis to the idea: "Outside: he shall go out," and then God the Holy Spirit says, "Now hang onto your hats. I'm going to make this real clear: no more." The "no" part is "ou me," the strongest Greek negative. You're acquainted with that. This is the strongest absolute. There is no chance of you ever being removed from your position in heaven. That's very interesting. It's not only that we have eternal security now in our salvation, but how about up in heaven? Can you ever blow it there? Is it possible for you to undo everything that you have inherited through Christ there? No way. You cannot.

**The Immutability of Eternal Life**

Then there is another Greek word "eti." That's an adverb. It refers to time. It means "still," and the idea here is "any more ‐ at all." So, a literal translation of what the Greek Bible says is: "Outside: no way he will go out anymore." This is an emphatic way of saying, "Never again will the believer leave his place in heaven." That's why the Lord says, "You're going to be a pillar." A pillar does not move around. If a pillar is supporting a structure, and it moves around, as Samson demonstrated once and for all – when a pillar moves around, destructive effects follow, and you cannot move again. You are completely secure. As a pillar in God's temple in heaven, you are immovable. Never again can you be tempted to sin. You are immutable in absolute righteousness. In heaven, you can never again be tempted to sin. There is no chance in heaven of you repeating Adam's fall into evil. You are immutable in eternal life. You can never slip into Adam's disaster. There is no chance of repeating that. God's grace plan of salvation has made the worst believer among us a pillar forever – immutable in your positive volition obedience. No matter what you are now, you're going to an absolutely, positively obedient person there.

**Sinlessness**

You turn your nose up in the air at a lot of spiritual things now. You're indifferent to the things that you hear taught. In heaven, you're going to be perfectly obedient, and there'll be no chance of your becoming anything else, but forever a pillar in God's temple – a sinless body. That pillar represents that you will be a perfectly, absolutely sinless body.

So, we church-age saints stand for all eternity to the glory of God. Is it any wonder that we shall never cease singing His praises? There will be no running out of God's temple in fear as the people in Philadelphia ran out of their buildings when the earthquake came. There'll be no celestial earthquakes – complete stability.

You are Bible doctrine, fundamental type believers. Today, you're rejected. Today you're sneered at. Today you're belittled by human viewpoint people, and even human viewpoint Christians. But, I'm here to tell you that, on the authority of God's Word, you are someday going to be a pillar in heaven itself – the great temple of God of all eternity. You will be in a position of honor as the bride of Christ, and you'll be in a position of great beauty, as perfect holiness, reflecting the glory of God.

Pillars of strength is what we will be, through doctrine in our souls, and pillars of stability through the indwelling Holy Spirit, now and forever. This symbol should tell us that, apart from God and from His Word, no one can live beyond an animal existence. Satan has perverted the symbol of the pillar, and most people today are pillars of Satan. Which are you? And if you are destined as a believer to be a pillar of God, how compatible are you to that destiny now? How much do you reflect the integrity of God; the holiness of God; and, the obedience to the Word of God, and all that it reflects? I don't care who it is you think of. I don't care how disappointing that person is as a believer. Wonder of wonders, someday, each of you will be a magnificent pillar in God's heaven, with all that God has indicated that that connotes. Satan's perversion of that symbol will fall into the dust. You will stand safely and true forever.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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